

Appendix 2: Mt Victoria

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2.1 Significance of Mt Victoria to the City

Mt Victoria is a highly visible inner city residential suburb that forms an important backdrop to the city. Mt Victoria has a distinctive character that makes a considerable contribution to Wellington’s collective identity. The significance of Mt Victoria is derived from:

Historical Continuity

Being one of the early settlement areas in Wellington, with a high proportion of the original buildings still remaining, Mt Victoria demonstrates historical patterns of development and conveys a sense of continuity and collective memory.

Mt Victoria can justifiably be labelled as a Victorian/Edwardian suburb. Compared to other parts of the city, the concentration of old buildings in Mt Victoria is high. Over 80% of buildings were constructed before 1920. The similarity of building age is directly related to the consistency of building types, styles and patterns typical for Mount Victoria.

Heritage significance

Mt Victoria is significant as a reasonably intact, large area characteristic of the early development of Wellington’s residential areas. Many of the remaining older buildings have been substantially modified over time. However, their original primary form generally remains apparent. Despite some in-fill multi-unit housing in recent decades, the area has a visual unity and coherence based on the character of its original buildings. This coherence is derived from general similarity of building type, scale and materials and distinctive patterns of building alignment and orientation.



Northern Mt Victoria – an important visual backdrop to the city



Similarity of scale, materials and recurring building types

Distinctive character

Mt Victoria’s distinctive character is derived from the collective presence of large numbers of original buildings. Together these buildings create strongly identifiable formal and spatial patterns. In this respect, individual landmark buildings and particular styles are less important than the size, shape, orientation and position of dwellings and open space.



Aesthetic coherence based on the character of the original dwellings within the area

2.2 Character Overview

Mt Victoria covers a total area of around 45 ha. As a whole, Mt Victoria is characterised by local differences in character and a diversity of building forms and styles. However, there is a predominance of Victorian or Edwardian villas and cottages.

Within Mt Victoria, there are several areas with particularly consistent building character. These include Moir Street, Armour Avenue, Porritt Avenue, Scarborough Tce, Queen Street and Elizabeth Street.

The northern end of Mt Victoria, north east from Roxborough Street, known as Mt Victoria North / St Gerards, has long been recognised as a separate sub-area with consistency of character. Mt Victoria North / St Gerards has a slightly different status determined by its location, which makes it an integral part of the visual image of the Central City.

The underlying character of the rest of Mt Victoria is based on some repetitive patterns. These patterns are:



The Villa is a predominant building type

Building type

Limited range of building types

A small number of building types (including villa, bungalow, cottage and apartment block) account for the underlying form and layout of most dwellings.

Hybrid building character

Repeated additions and alterations mean that the external appearance of individual houses often takes on a hybrid character which cannot be attributed to any single architectural style or era.



The Cottage is another recurring building type

Building size

Common building heights

Neighbouring dwellings often share common building height, or limited range of heights, typically between one, and two and a half storeys. This predominant scale range contrasts with atypical multi-storey apartment blocks distributed throughout the area.

Buildings on corner sites are often two storeys.

Common frontage widths

Neighbouring dwellings sometimes share a common frontage width, or a limited range of widths.



Neighbouring dwellings often share common dimensions

Landform and character

Strong relationship between building character and topography

The ridges typically display larger (taller, but sometimes also narrower) houses, set back more deeply from the street frontage. The hollows frequently have smaller, (lower and often broader) dwellings built closer to the street. This layout is clearly evident along Brougham and Austin Streets. Porritt Avenue exhibits the same pattern on a smaller scale.

Intensity of Development

Perception of high density

The density of development as perceived from the street is high, though the predominant site coverage, measured numerically, is around 40%. A large portion of the remaining site area is typically devoted to a rear yard.

Frontage setbacks and building relationship to the street

Strongly defined street wall

A common feature of Mt Victoria's streetscape is the strong building edge and sense of enclosure created by shallow front yards, minimal side yards and a limited building height range. Picket fences, concrete or masonry retaining walls, gates, steps and free standing garages often provide a secondary source of spatial definition at the street boundary.

Consistent alignment between the building and the street grid.

Neighbouring dwellings often conform to a uniform setback from the street (although front yards may vary in depth from one street to another and on different sides of the same street). Together with the shallow setbacks this contributes to a strong sense of spatial enclosure.

Clearly defined front elevations

Front elevations are consistently orientated towards the street.

Corner dwellings face major streets

Where a minor street intersects with a major street, the corner dwelling typically faces the major street. Consequently, corner houses present their side elevation to the minor street. Corner buildings can be prominent streetscape elements. Often they provide visual reference and a sense of orientation at street intersections, and / or mark the entrance to the sub-areas



Strongly defined street wall



Corner dwellings face major streets

identified in this appendix.

Side and rear yards

Side yards are typically minimal

These allow little or no visual separation between neighbouring dwellings. Most street frontages are perceived as a continuous building wall.

Private rear yards are important

Rear yards are an important attribute of many Mt Victoria properties, providing private open space for each dwelling. Although rear yards are generally not visible from the street they are an important characteristic amenity feature of the area.

The most common depth of a rear yard for Mt Victoria as a whole is 8 metres. Rear yards often accommodate mature vegetation that enhances the visual separation between dwellings.



The rear yard is an important attribute of Mt Victoria properties

Vehicle access and parking

Limited on-site carparking

The typical shallow frontage setbacks do not readily accommodate vehicles. Multiple garages on the street frontage are unusual. Exceptions occur in a few specific locations where garages belong to a continuous wall along the street edge.

Building Form

Limited range of roof types

The most common roof types include;

- Hipped roof and a combination hip and gabled for villas;
- Gabled roofs for cottages and bungalows; and
- Flat roofs for apartment blocks.

The majority of roofs are moderately pitched. Steeply pitched roofs are less typical and associated mainly with narrow roof spans, for example cottages and Arts and Crafts style houses.



Limited range of roof types

Façade treatment

Front elevations are strongly articulated

Typically front elevations have strongly articulated surfaces with three-dimensional construction detail or decorative elements. Bay windows, porches and verandas are common design features.

Street elevations are commonly articulated as a window module (major) and an entry module (minor), or as two window modules, or as two window modules and an entry module.



Clearly defined front elevations

Materials

Limited palette of materials

Painted weatherboards are typical for exterior walls and corrugated iron is the predominant roofing material. Most buildings exhibit light, highly reflective colours and wall materials.

Naturally weathered timber and brick walls are rare, and plastered walls are mainly associated with recent multi-unit development.



Painted weatherboards and corrugated iron are the predominant materials.

Frontage landscaping and fencing

Shallow front yards

Shallow front yards and small gardens are important elements of the streetscape. Most streets are characterised by strong visual enclosure. Picket fences, concrete or masonry walls, gates, steps and free standing garages often provide a secondary sense of enclosure.

2.3 Sub-Areas in Mt Victoria

Several sub-areas within Mt Victoria possess special character significance. These include Moir Street, Armour Avenue, Porritt Avenue, Scarborough Terrace, Queen Street and Elizabeth Street, and Mt Victoria North/St Gerard's.

The character significance of these sub-areas is derived from a particular consistency of building character and/or unique spatial qualities. As a result the streetscape appears strongly unified.

Beyond consistency of building age, and building alignment and orientation (typical for the area as a whole), consistency relating to some or all of the following characteristics has been considered when identifying the sub-areas:

- Building scale (height and size of building footprint)
- Building type and style
- Frontage setbacks
- Roof form and façade treatment
- Sense of originality/intactness of the primary building form

In general, the approach to the sub-areas has been to emphasise the collective streetscape values of the sub-area as a whole, rather than the particular characteristics of a single building unit. For this reason a limited number of individual developments which depart from the typical patterns of the sub-area have been included.

The identified sub-areas are relatively large concentrations of similar buildings. As such they differ from the numerous smaller building groupings with consistent character spread throughout Mt Victoria, and which typically consist of a row of three or more original dwellings.

In most cases corner properties have been excluded from the sub-areas in Mount Victoria. The main reason for this is that typically corner properties do not face the street which is the subject of the sub area. Rather they establish a strong relationship, in terms of frontage setbacks and overall building character, with the street at 90° to the street which is the subject of the sub-area. However, some corner dwellings are directly related to the sub-area and are important as entry points to the sub-areas.

Where a sub-area crosses a street (eg the Elizabeth Street area) the corner properties have been included.

Moir Street



Notable concentration of identical buildings of consistent type and scale



High proportion of single storey buildings at street level

Moir Street is characterised by:

Building Age

The street is a concentration of original dwellings with only one recent multi-unit development at the north east corner of the street.

Building Height

There are a large number of single storey dwellings as seen from the street, with some of these, on the western side extending to two storeys. There are a small number of two storey dwellings located primarily on the eastern side of the street.



The cottage is the predominant building type

Building Type

Building types along Moir Street include cottages, bungalows and villas. However, the cottage is the predominant building type.

Roof Form

The street is characterised by a mix of roof types, including gabled roof for the bungalows and the cottages and hipped roofs for the villas.

Treatment of Front Elevations

Buildings present a “public face” to the street with bay windows and/or entries and verandahs oriented to the street.

Materials

Materials include corrugated iron for the roofs and rusticated or bevel back weatherboards for the walls.

Frontage setbacks and building relationship to the street

Moir Street is characterised by variable, but generally small frontage setbacks. Many of the sites have front gardens with low fences along the street.

The cottages are typically sited with their narrow frontages to the street.

Parking

Garages are not typical in this street. Dwellings with larger setbacks use their front yards as carpads.



Garages are not typical. Some dwellings with larger set backs use their front yards as carpads

Armour Avenue



High proportion of double storey dwellings

Armour Avenue is characterised by:

Building Age

All buildings, except a three storey block of flats are original dwellings.

Building Height

There is a high proportion of two storey dwellings. There are several large three storey dwellings on the southern side of the street.

Building Type

The two storey villa is the predominant type along the northern side of the street, while the southern side accommodates a variety of types and styles, including Arts and Crafts style houses.



The double storey villa is the predominant building type along the northern side of Armour Avenue

Roof Form

There is a mix of roof types including hipped, moderately pitched roofs for the villas and steeper gabled roofs for many of the dwellings on the southern side of the street.

Treatment of Front Elevations

Buildings present a “public face” to the street with bay windows and/or entries and verandahs facing the street.

Materials

Typical materials include corrugated iron for the roofs and rusticated weatherboards for the villas. Bevel back weatherboards, plaster finish and roof tiles are typical of the Arts and Crafts style houses.

Frontage setback and building relationship to the street

Buildings on the northern side of the street have shallow setbacks with front gardens with low picket fences. Dwellings on the southern side have generally larger frontage setbacks, some with heavily planted front gardens and mature trees.

Parking

Off street parking is not typical on the northern side of the street. Along the southern side of the street some of the larger dwelling have garages built as separate structures and set back from the street boundary.



Dwellings on the southern side have deeper setbacks

Porritt Avenue



Porritt Avenue is characterised by:

Building Age

The majority of buildings are original dwellings.

Building Height

Overall there is a high proportion of single storey dwellings. The two sides of the street exhibit different building height patterns. The predominant pattern along the eastern, higher side of the street is of single storey dwellings, many of which are built over a raised terrace.

The western side of the street, south of Armour Avenue is dominated by two storey dwellings, while north of Armour Avenue, there is approximately an equivalent number of single and double storey dwellings. The arrangement of these dwellings into groups of one and two storeys is a characteristic feature of the streetscape.



High proportion of single storey dwellings



Predominant pattern of two storey villas along the western side of the street, south of Armour Avenue



Group of two storey villas in contrast to the predominant setting of single storey dwellings

Building Type

The single storey villa is the predominant type along the eastern side of the street.

The two storey villa is typical for the western side of Porritt Avenue (its southern end) while its northern end is characterised by a large number of cottages, including a notable group of six almost identical two storey cottages.

Roof Form

There is a mix of roof types including hipped, moderately pitched roofs for the villas and gabled roofs for the cottages.

Treatment of Front Elevations

Buildings present a “public face” to the street with bay windows and/or entries and verandahs facing the street.

Materials

Typical materials include corrugated iron for the roofs and rusticated weatherboards for the walls. Bevel back weatherboards are found only in a limited number of dwellings. Plaster finish walls are typically associated with garages.

Frontage setback and building relationship to the street

Porritt Avenue is characterised by variable frontage setback. The street edge is defined by low fencing and/or garages built to the front boundary.

Parking

Most of the single storey dwellings along the eastern side of the street (between Armour Avenue and Ellice Street) and some of the two storey villas have garages. These are typically built as separate structures to the street boundary.



Notable concentration of identical double storey cottages on the western side of Porritt Avenue



Moderately pitched roof form

Scarborough Terrace



Double storey bungalows and villas are typical along the eastern, higher side of Scarborough Terrace

Scarborough Terrace is characterised by:

Building Age

Most buildings are original old dwellings

There are three more recent developments (blocks of flats) located at the south west corner of Scarborough Tce, at the south west corner of Derby Street and on the opposite, east side of the street, respectively. The scale and design appearance of these do not reflect the predominant character of the street.

Building Height

The two sides of the street exhibit different building height patterns.

The western side of the street is dominated by single storey dwellings, while the eastern side is characterised by a mixture of one and two storey dwellings. Many of these dwellings on the eastern side are built over raised platforms. Many of the single storey dwellings are grouped together and located mainly towards the northern end of the street.



Predominant pattern of single storey dwellings with shallow setbacks, low fences and no garages are typical along the western side

Building Type

Cottages, villas and bungalows of variable styles are typical for the eastern side of the street, while the western side is dominated by cottages and bungalows.

There are two groupings of almost identical buildings. These include a group of single storey villas, raised above street level, along the eastern side of the street, and a grouping of single storey dwellings along the western side of the street, towards its northern end.

Roof Form

There is a mix of roof types including hipped, moderately pitched roofs for the villas and gabled roofs for the cottages and bungalows.

Treatment of Front Elevation

Buildings present a “public face” to the street with, bay windows and/or entries and verandahs oriented to the street.

Materials

Typical materials include corrugated iron for the roofs and rusticated weatherboards for the walls. Bevel back weatherboards are typical for some of the dwellings, predominantly those on the eastern side of the street. Plaster finish walls are typical for the garages and the recent multi-unit development.

Frontage setback and building relationship to the street

Frontage setbacks along the eastern side of the street are relatively large, while on the western side of the street these are generally shallow.

Parking

There is limited on-site parking, primarily on the eastern side of the street, where some dwellings have garages built to the street boundary.

General

Mature trees, planted rhythmically along the street are important elements of the streetscape.



Eastern side of Scarborough Terrace. A notable concentration of identical single villas built over raised platforms.



Some dwellings on the eastern side, have garages integrated into the building structure

Queen Street



Consistent pattern of double storey dwellings along the northern side of Queen Street



Significant number of single storey dwellings on the southern side of the street

Queen Street is characterised by:

Building Age

The majority of buildings are original old dwellings.

Building Height

The predominant pattern along the northern side of the street is of two storey dwellings, while the southern street frontage is dominated by single storey dwellings.

Building Type

Villas are typical for the northern side of the street, while cottages are the predominant type along the southern side.

There are several pairs of semi-detached dwellings located along either side of the street.

Roof Form

The gabled moderately pitched roof is the predominant roof form. There are also hipped moderately pitched roofs.



Pairs of terraced houses along the street

Treatment of Front Elevations

Buildings have well defined front elevations with bay windows, and/or entrances and verandahs oriented to the street.

Materials

Typical materials include corrugated iron for the roofs and rusticated weatherboards for the walls. Bevel back weatherboards are found only in a limited number of dwellings.

Frontage setback and building relationship to the street

The northern side of the street is characterised by a general consistency of frontage setbacks. In comparison frontage setbacks on the southern side are more variable.

Parking

Very few dwellings have garages.

Elizabeth Street



High proportion of cottages along the southern side of the street



Large number of single storey dwellings

Elizabeth Street is characterised by:

Building Age

The majority of buildings are original old dwellings.

Building Height

The street is characterised by a large number of single storey buildings.

Building Type

Cottages and villas are the predominant building types along Elizabeth Street. There is a notable grouping of identical double storey cottages on the northern side of the street.

Roof Form

Villa roofs are typically hipped and moderately pitched.

Cottage roofs are generally gabled and predominantly steeply pitched. The alternative cottage roof is moderately hipped pitched.



Notable concentration of identical 2 storey cottages

Treatment of Front Elevations

Buildings have well defined front elevations with bay windows and/or entrances oriented to the street. Side entrances, often determined by the narrow building frontages, are typical for some of the dwellings along the southern side of the street.

Materials

Corrugated iron and rusticated weatherboards are the typical materials for roofing and walls respectively.

Frontage setbacks and building relationship to the street.

Elizabeth Street is characterised by variable generally shallow frontage setbacks. There are groupings of dwellings with uniform frontage setbacks.

Mt Victoria North / St Gerards



McFarlane Street – eastern side

Northern Mt Victoria is an essential component of the character and collective identity of Wellington. This area includes McFarlane Street, upper Hawker Street, Doctors Commons, McIntyre Terrace, Kennedy Street, Shannon Street and Roxburgh Street. The latter has been included because of its “border” location marking the southern boundary of the Mt Victoria North/ St Gerards sub-area. The buildings along these streets are prominent in views from the CBD, waterfront, Kelburn, Wadestown and the western Town Belt.

Individually, the residential buildings are of no outstanding architectural or historic merit, yet they are distinctive because of the built pattern created by their orientation, construction, style and relationship to St Gerard's Monastery. The impact of these buildings is unique to Wellington and provides a dramatic backdrop to the harbour.



Hawker Street – strongly defined street edge

Mt Victoria North / St Gerards is characterised by:

Building Age

The area contains a large number of original old dwellings, with most of the houses built in the late nineteenth century

Building Height

The area contains a high proportion of double storey dwellings. Single storey dwellings are predominantly located along the pedestrian lanes, running perpendicular to Hawker Street (Kennedy Street, Doctors Common and McIntyre Street). Some single storey dwellings are also found along the lower, western side, of Hawker Street.

Building Type

There is a general consistency of building type and scale, with the two storey villa being the predominant type. This consistency is most apparent along Hawker and McFarlane Streets.

Houses are typically also on long narrow sections with minimal side yards, and orientated to the north or north west to maximise sun and views over the harbour. The windows of existing buildings are typically discrete elements set within a much larger façade - large expanses of sheet glass are atypical, as these mostly appear in nearby areas where newer buildings have been built for the views.

Frontage setbacks and building relationship to the street

In relation to setbacks and building scale, the two sides of both McFarlane and Hawker Streets, as well as Roxburgh street, exhibit different patterns.

McFarlane Street

The two sides of McFarlane Street, due to the changing topography, are perceived as almost separate entities. The eastern, higher side of McFarlane Street is characterised by larger and more variable setbacks and a consistent pattern of two storey dwellings above raised gardens, with high retaining walls, steps and garages at the street boundary. The consistency is most strongly expressed within the northern part of the street, where there is a notable concentration of two storey villas.



McFarlane Street (eastern side) – a notable collection of original dwellings

The western, lower side of McFarlane Street is characterised by shallow setbacks, low fences defining the street edge and two storey dwellings, many of which extend to three storeys at the rear. There is a notable grouping of similar in type, siting and scale buildings located at the southern end of the street.



Consistency of building type and scale – McFarlane Street, western side (southern end)

Hawker Street

The patterns along the two sides of Hawker Street are generally similar to those of McFarlane Street. The higher, eastern side of Hawker Street has deeper setbacks and larger two storey dwellings built above raised terraces, with high retaining walls at the street edge. Due to the topography, the buildings on the eastern side have stronger visual presence than those on the lower, western side. The consistency of building scale, similar to McFarlane Street, is most apparent at the northern end of the street.

The western, lower side of Hawker Street has single and double storey dwellings with variable frontage setbacks.



Hawker Street (eastern side) consistency of building type and scale

Roxburgh Street

Roxburgh Street, has a different orientation to the other Mt Victoria North streets. However, similarly to McFarlane Street, the two sides of Roxburgh Street, because of the changing topography, appear as separate entities. The north eastern, higher side has buildings of variable form, type style and scale with some more recent developments. On the other side of the street, the frontage setbacks are generally deeper and the scale of the individual buildings larger.

The southern, lower side of the Roxburgh Street is characterised by shallower setbacks and dwellings with narrower frontages. This side of the street exhibits a stronger sense of consistent character resulting in large part from similarity of building age.

Roof Form

The predominant roof form is the hipped roof. Many of the bay villas incorporate gabled roof over the front bay.

Treatment of Front Elevations

The majority of buildings exhibit a “public face” to the street with their entries, bay windows and verandahs oriented to the street. Some properties on the eastern side of Hawker Street have their main entrances on the side of the dwelling typically accessed through paths or steps.

Materials

Predominant materials are weatherboards and corrugated iron for walls and roofing respectively.

Parking

With the exception of the dwellings along the pedestrian lanes and most of those on the south eastern side of Roxburgh Street the majority of the remaining dwellings have off-street carparking in the form of garages or carpads.



Single storey dwellings found along the western side of Hawker Street



Most dwellings exhibit a “public face” to street with bay windows and front gardens oriented to the street